

# DPC Newsletter

Volume 2, Issue 1 – November 2003

## New Science Journal Issues Reports on Delta Restoration

A new electronic journal dedicated to science and research, [San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science](#), made its online debut on October 3, 2003. Supported by the Bay-Delta Science Program, the San Francisco Bay-Delta Science Consortium, U.C. Davis, and the John Muir Institute of the Environment, this new journal provides an electronic forum for scientific discussion and peer-reviewed research about the San Francisco Bay, the Delta, and upstream watersheds.

In the first edition of the journal, experts in Bay and Delta restoration release the findings from numerous studies that have been funded by the Bay-Delta Program (CALFED) over the last several years. In addition to a few introductory articles about the journal and the important role science will play in future decision-making, there are four articles relating to tidal wetland restoration in the Delta; these address the benefit of tidal restoration to native fish species, effects of organic carbon production on the ecosystem and drinking water quality, the potential for increased mercury accumulation in the food web, and the sustainability of restored tidal marshes, respectively.

Some of the major findings of these studies:

- The presence of nonnative invasive plant and animal species will likely reduce any benefits of tidal wetland restoration to native fishes.
- Considerable progress has been made in understanding organic carbon sources and fate, yet more study is needed on the propensity of organic carbon from different Delta land uses to form carcinogenic disinfection byproducts in water treatment facilities.
- Tidal wetlands provide conditions conducive to the methylation of mercury, so creation of tidal wetlands is likely to increase the accumulation of mercury in the food web, posing threats to wildlife and to human health.
- Once tidal wetlands have been restored, they are likely to sustain themselves for at least 100 years, even in light of projected rates of sea level rise and limited sediment supply.

The reports also document major uncertainties related to these findings, and advocate a regional and multidisciplinary approach for continued research on these issues. The report's authors assert that the Bay-Delta Science Program (CALFED) would be the appropriate venue in which to address these issues in the future.

The first edition of [San Francisco Estuary and Watershed Science](#) is available at <http://repositories.cdlib.org/jmie/sfew>. Alternatively, you can call Commission staff at (916) 776-2290 or [dpc@citlink.net](mailto:dpc@citlink.net), and we'd be happy to mail copies of the reports to you.

## Governor's Action on Legislation of Interest

The first half of the 2003-2004 legislative session came to an end when the Legislature convened for Interim Recess on September 12, 2003. October 12 was the last day for Governor Davis to sign or veto the bills that were passed by the Legislature before it adjourned.

The Commission took a position of "support" on four bills during the first half of the legislative session. Of those four bills, three have been signed into law by Governor Davis:

**AB 66 (Leslie), Riparian Habitat: Adopt-a-Riverway Program.** This bill authorizes the Dept. of Food and Agriculture to accept funds or services for maintenance or enhancement of defined waterways; the goal is the removal of noxious and invasive weeds.

**AB 1014 (Canciamilla), Vessels: Abandonment.** This bill requires the Dept. of Boating and Waterways to recommend strategies to prevent vessels from being abandoned. The recommendations should facilitate the ability of owners to turn in their recreational vessels to public agencies for disposal in lieu of abandonment.

**AB 1405 (Wolk and Harmon), California Watershed Protection and Restoration Act.** This bill establishes the criteria for the State to recognize watershed restoration efforts undertaken voluntarily by local watershed partnerships. The intent is to promote participation by all stakeholders in local watershed partnerships.

There are a couple of other bills of interest that were not listed on the Commission's monthly legislation tracking report, which were signed into law by Governor Davis:

**AB 396 (Harman), Shared Habitat Alliance for Recreational Enhancement (SHARE) Program.** This bill requires the Dept. of Fish and Game to work cooperatively with nongovernmental organizations to increase wildlife-dependent recreational activities on private lands.

**SB 923 (Sher), Water Quality: Waivers.** This bill makes changes to how Regional Water Quality Control Boards administer agricultural discharges under conditional waiver programs. It authorizes the State Water Resources Control Board to establish a fee for farms participating in waiver programs (but does not require Regional Boards to impose payment). It also establishes higher monitoring requirements than are required for waste discharge permits.

The statutes that were signed into law by Governor Davis will take effect on January 1, 2004. The Legislature will reconvene for the second half of the 2003-2004 legislative session on January 5, 2004.

## State Parks Director Appoints New Commissioner

CA Dept. of Parks and Recreation Director Ruth Coleman has appointed a new representative for State Parks on the Commission.

**Kirk Sturm** has replaced former Commissioner **Ron Brean** as the Division Chief of State Parks' Northern Division, and has been named by Director Coleman to replace Mr. Brean on the Commission as well.

Mr. Sturm has served in various positions with State Parks; before his promotion to his current position, he served as the Superintendent of Hearst Castle State Park. His service at State Parks over the years has given him experience in operations, planning, acquisitions, public safety, education, and emergency services — all of which should serve the Commission very well.

The Commission approved a Resolution of Appreciation for Ron Brean at its meeting on September 25, 2003. Mr. Brean had served on the Commission since June 1998; he has since been promoted to a new position as Deputy Director of Administration.

The Commission and its staff congratulates Mr. Brean on his promotion, extends its wholehearted thanks to Mr. Brean for his service, and welcome Mr. Sturm to the Commission!

## City of Elk Grove To Consider General Plan Adoption

Elk Grove's City Council will be considering adoption of the City's new General Plan at its meeting on Wednesday, November 19. The General Plan consists of the seven elements required by State law (Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety), as well as Economic Development, Historic Resources, and Parks/Trails.

The General Plan provides detailed land use policies and maps for the area within the City's current boundary and sphere of influence (shown on the map at right; the incorporation of Laguna West, shown with hatch marks, should be finalized by December 15, 2003). The General Plan also provides more conceptual land use recommendations for areas outside the city limits (e.g., the City's "planning area"); the conceptual policies in these areas over which the City does not have jurisdiction are advisory only. The larger "planning area" within the General Plan does include a portion of the Delta Primary Zone — land west of I-5, north of Hood-Franklin Road, east of the Sacramento River, and south of the City of Sacramento's existing boundary.

Commission staff has been following the development of this General Plan, particularly with respect to what the inclusion of Primary Zone lands within Elk Grove's "planning area" actually entails. The City's Planning Department staff has responded that the Conservation/Air Quality element of the General Plan recognizes the Commission's jurisdiction over these lands under its General Plan Policy CAQ-6, which states that the City's conceptual land use policies will conform with the Commission's adopted Land Use Management Plan. These lands are currently identified as "Agricultural Cropland" within the EIR that accompanies this General Plan.

Commission staff will continue to work with the City to address any policy issues on Primary Zone lands that may arise in the future. A copy of the General Plan and accompanying EIR are available online at <http://www.egplanning.org/generalplan/downloads.html>.

## Celebrating the Holidays, Delta Style!

With Thanksgiving and Christmas just around the corner, the Delta is already abuzz with holiday activity!

Some noteworthy events for the Thanksgiving holiday include a week-long fishing derby hosted by the Bethel Island Chamber of Commerce (November 22-29), and a potluck dinner at Lost Isle on Thanksgiving day.

And in celebration of the Christmas holidays, several Delta area yacht clubs and marinas will be putting on lighted boat parades. Three boat parades are scheduled for the evening of Saturday, December 6: the **Delta Reflections Lighted Boat Christmas Parade** along the Stockton Deepwater Ship Channel (Windmill Cove), the **Rio Vista Lighted Boat Christmas Parade** from Delta Marina to the Rio Vista bridge, and the **Antioch Delta Delites Parade**, from the Antioch Bridge to the City's waterfront.

For more information on these and other exciting holiday happenings in the Delta, go to Hal Schell's

website, [www.californiadelta.org](http://www.californiadelta.org). This website is a great source of information for everything “Delta”, year-round!

## **Senate Select Committee to Consider Commission’s Future**

As many of you are aware, the State’s current budget woes have prompted the Legislature to take a hard look at where the State can save money. This exercise has brought about the consideration of merging State agencies that serve similar functions, as well as eliminating agencies that are no longer necessary or that appear to duplicate the activities of others.

The Commission has not been exempt from this scrutiny, and is currently under evaluation as to whether its activities could in fact be folded into the California Bay-Delta Authority’s (formerly CALFED) program, and what overall value the Commission’s continued existence provides to the State.

The Senate Select Committee on Delta Resources and Development will be considering these issues at an informational hearing to be held on November 12 in Walnut Grove. Senator Michael Machado, who chairs the Committee, has asked the Executive Director, local government representatives of the Delta, and others who have an interest in the Delta to testify at the hearing.

**Senate Select Committee on Delta Resources and Development**  
***Informational Hearing***

**Wednesday, November 12, 2003**

**10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m.**

**Jean Harvie Community Center**

**Walnut Grove, CA 95690**